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Approved As Written
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MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 6-05
Wednesday, March 23, 2005

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the City Hall Council Chamber Room at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 23, 2005.

PRESENT
John Britton, Chair
Frank Hilton Gerald Holtz
Brigitta Mullican Kate Ostell
Robin Wiener

Absent: Steve Johnson

Present: Scott Parker, Acting Chief of Planning
Sondra Block, Assistant City Attorney
Castor Chasten, Planner III
Margaret Hall, Planner II
Sandra Marks, Transportation Division

Commissioner Britton also announced that the first two items, Final Record Plats PLT2005-00440 and 00441, Falls Grove Associates, listed on the agenda have been removed for this evening.

Commissioner Britton announced that it is Commissioner Mullican's last night as a Planning Commissioner. He stated that Commissioner Mullican has been on the Commission for seven years and she has been dedicated in her role as a Commissioner and has certainly shown her commitment to the community through her actions on the Commission. The Commission thanked Commissioner Mullican for her contribution to the City of Rockville.

REVIEW AND ACTION

Final Record Plat PLT2005-00443, Paul Gootzeit

The applicant is proposing to resubdivide an existing single-family residential property into a single record lot in the Sherman's Addition to Roxboro subdivision.

Ms. Hall presented the staff report. Ms. Hall stated that is a property that has been in the same configuration since 1977. The proposal is to subdivide half of Lot 4 and all of Lot 5 to combine into a single record lot. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing house to construct a new house. Ms. Hall noted that this is a resubdivision of land because they are combining two pieces of two record lots. Ms. Hall stated that this is not a typical subdivision. It is one property and they want one house.

Paul Gootzeit, applicant, presented his request.

In response to Commissioner Hilton, Mr. Gootzeit described the property as a typical size lot in the neighborhood. It is located on Brent Road. He stated that they are not trying to increase density; they just want to have it as one property. He explained that he wants to put to demolish the existing house and construct a 3,000 square foot house. In combining the lots, it is a typical size lot for the neighborhood in that it is about 9,000 or 10,000 square feet. The current house is less than 3,000 square feet. Commissioner Hilton commented that there is a movement in Rockville to buy properties and then build larger homes than what is currently there. Mr. Gootzeit stated that he believes the neighbors would be happy with the new house. He noted that it is a house he is going to sell. Ms. Hall stated that these lots are the same size as the lots that back up to them. She said that the Roxboro neighborhood range from 6,000 square feet and up. The houses

Commissioner Ostell stated that the houses on Brent Road are modest in size. Mr. Gootzeit said that the house would not be as imposing as some of the houses that have been built in that neighborhood. He said he would not be overbuilding in the area.

After further discussion, Commissioner Holtz moved, seconded by Commissioner Mullican to approve Final Record Plat PLT2005-00443, Paul Gootzeit per staff's recommendations. The motion passed unanimously.

Use Permit Application USE2005-00681, Woottons Crossing

The applicant is proposing to construct a freestanding branch bank, without drive-thru teller facilities, on the eastern half of the property and a freestanding drug store with ancillary drive-thru pharmacy facilities on the remainder of the site. The property is located at the northwest corner of Wootton Parkway and Rockville Pike.

Mr. Chasten presented the staff report. Mr. Chasten described the size and location of the property, which is currently undeveloped. He said the site has frontage on three public streets, Rockville Pike to the east, Wootton Parkway to the south and Fleet Street to the west. The site is surrounded on all sides by commercial land uses, except on its western side, where there are single-family residential dwellings. The site currently has vehicular access onto Wootton Parkway and the old abandoned Ritchie Parkway right-of-way, which, today, is an access easement. The applicant proposes to construct a 3,420 square foot freestanding Riggs Branch Bank, without customer drive-thru teller facilities, and surface parking facilities on the eastern portion of the site. On the western portion of the site, the applicant plans to construct a 14,530 square foot Eckerd Drug Store with customer drive-

thru pharmacy facilities. The drive-thru pharmacy will be located on the southwestern corner of the building, fronting Wootton Parkway. Both the bank and the drug store will be of masonry, glass, and metal construction. Vehicular access to the site will be provided via a new site entrance on Wootton Parkway, located in nearly the same location as that which exists today. Vehicular access will also be provided via the existing access easement located along the site's northern boundary, which is adjacent to the Ritchie Shopping Center. Mr. Chasten stated that 83 parking spaces are required for the bank and drug store site uses. A minimum of 11 parking spaces must be provided for the proposed branch bank office building. For the proposed drug store, a minimum of 72 spaces, are required to be provided. The overall proposed site development would have total lot coverage of 17,957 square feet of building space, which is about 20% of lot coverage. Mr. Chasten stated that, with the concurrence of the owners of the neighboring Ritchie Shopping Center, the applicant also has been requested to close the center's southwestern most site entrance, which currently provides access via the old Ritchie Parkway public right-of-way and Fleet Street to the shopping center. Due to safety and site circulation concerns, the applicant will work with the owners of the shopping center to close that entrance and construct a new entrance into the center, which will enter from the Fleet Street (rear) side of the property.

Mr. Chasten stated that the proposed drug store's rear loading area would be accessed via the proposed new one-way travel way, which also enters onto the old abandoned Ritchie Parkway right-of-way. In an effort to make that intersection operate more safely and efficiently, the applicant will construct a new Fleet Street driveway entrance into the Ritchie Center so that the existing entrance in front of the site's 7-11 Convenience Store can be closed.

The Commission discussed concerns with the layout of the site, access to the site, traffic and intersection issues.

Ms. Marks discussed the number of trips generated by the use.

Commissioner Ostell questioned Condition 5 in the Transportation Staff Report, dated March 16, 2005 regarding the applicant's contribution towards the construction of the projects identified in Town Center Capacity Study. She pointed out that the Capacity Study had not gone before the Mayor and Council. Ms. Marks stated that the draft has gone before the Mayor and Council. Ms. Marks explained how the projects are selected to go for further study.

Jody Kline, Attorney, presented the applicant's request.

David Weber, principal with Gutschik Little and Weber explained the site plan. He discussed the driveway access to the site and the agreement with the owners of the Ritchie Shopping Center and the applicant regarding the closing of the center's southwestern most site entrance.

Mr. Kline stated that he thought he was going to be standing before the Commission about eight months ago with a proposal to build Fleet Street, which he believed would have

corrected the failing intersection 355, and the City told them that, for other planning reasons, they did not want to do that. Therefore, for the last eight months, it has been a push and pull with staff trying to identify other measures that would try to replicate the benefit they would have gotten out of building Fleet Street. One of those was to make the Center a lot more pedestrian, bicycle oriented. Mr. Kline stated that there many features with this retail center because are much more neighborhood oriented to try to increase pedestrians as compared to vehicular issues.

Commissioner Hilton asked if they had any objections to putting a device that would prevent people from making a right turn out of the driveway into the face of oncoming traffic. Mr. Weber stated that one of the conditions of approval has to do with striping and signage. It is their intention to provide the appropriate signage in that area "right turn only".

The Commission further discussed concerns regarding access to the site, and Fleet Street right-of-way.

Mr. Kline stated that all of the conditions in the staff report are acceptable.

Commissioner Ostell questioned Condition 7, page 5 of the Transportation Study memo regarding construction of a six-foot asphalt pedestrian connection along Fleet Street right-of-way. She asked that, while the pedestrian connection is being rebuilt, would it still be accessible to pedestrians. Ms. Marks replied that currently there is a path there that is not in good condition, therefore, the path will be rebuilt and extended for pedestrians.

Commissioner Ostell asked about undergrounding of transformers, utilities and location of the dumpsters.

Mr. Weber replied that Riggs Bank will have their trash removed by a janitorial service. The Drug Store's dumpster location would be on the left side of the building and will be gated and screened.

Mr. Chasten stated that a waiver to place the transformer and utilities above ground would have to be approved by the Planning Commission Mr. Weber replied that they would explore with the tenant about placing the transformer underground.

The Commission further discussed the location of a bus stop, tree plantings on the site and truck delivery.

In response to staff, Mr. Kline stated that they will make sure that they are underground.

The following citizen testified:

William Meyer, 804 Leverton Road, recommend that one of things that needs to be addressed is the relocation of the existing Pepco wires. He pointed out that the City code does require that existing wires in the City be relocated underground and he requests that

that be a specific condition to this use permit. He also stated that this applicant is not addressing the needs of the transportation services of this area. Mr. Meyer also spoke about traffic on Wootton Parkway, pedestrian safety and deceleration and acceleration lanes. He stated that the intersection of 355 and Wootton Parkway should be looked at very closely.

In response to Commissioner Britton questioned staff regarding the rational about pedestrian safety for the Wootton Parkway and Rockville Pike intersection and staff's calculation of the by-pass traffic and the left turn movement from Fleet Street onto Wootton Parkway, particularly in the evening. Ms. Marks explained that the intersection of 355 and Wootton Parkway would not to be improved at this time for the reason that the City does not want to keep widening the intersections until they are completely unfriendly. Commissioner Britton asked if there was anything to enhance pedestrian safety at that intersection now. Ms. Marks replied that the applicant has been required to add safety measures to that intersection for the safety of the pedestrians.

The Commission further discussed the extension of Fleet Street, wetlands, shared circulation agreement with the owner of Ritchie Center, relocation of Pepco wires,

Commissioner Mullican moved, seconded by Commissioner Wiener to approve Use Permit Application USE2005-00681, Woottons Crossing per staff recommendations with the addition of a condition reinforcing the relocation of Pepco wires and pedestrian safety improvements on the Ritchie parkway side. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSION ITEMS

Old Business

Commissioner Hilton commented on the Town Center utility wires on Hungerford Drive have not been relocated.

Minutes

Commissioner Mullican moved, seconded by Commission Hilton to approve minutes of Meeting No. 24-04 as revised. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0-1 with Commissioner Wiener abstaining.

Commissioner Mullican read a statement announcing her last evening as a Planning Commissioner and her enjoyment of being part of the process in making important Rockville land use decisions. She said she plans to take all that she has learned and continue to serve the City of Rockville. She is very concerned about the direction the City of Rockville is heading in some areas. She feels that some of Rockville's priorities are shifting in the wrong direction and that citizens would lose the finer services Rockville has come to expect.

Commissioner Mullican said that she has read that the City of Gaithersburg pays their Planning Commissioners \$1500 stipend. How interesting it is to see how Rockville looks at compensation differently. She said she hopes that the City can come together to make Rockville go into the right direction. She said she promises to keep track of all the decisions the Commission continues to make. Commissioner Mullican stated that she has enjoyed very much serving on the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Britton again stated that the Commission thanks Commissioner Mullican for her commitment and contributions to the community.

ADJOURN

After further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Tansing, Commission Secretary